GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3558
ANSWERED ON:07.12.2016
Sensitive News/Videos
Sathyabama Smt. V.;Senthilnathan Shri PR.

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has constituted committees with regard to broadcast and internet journalism;
(b) if so, the details thereof;
(c) the total number of 24/7 News Channels at present in operation, language wise;
(d) whether the Government has any definite plan to regulate and restrict the 24/7 news channels from repeatedly telecasting sensitive news/videos which creates panic and unrest among the common public and affects the peace and communal harmony in the country; and
(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reason therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING [COL RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE (Retd.)]

(a) & (b). Ministry administers the Cable Act to regulate Cable TV Network including TV channels and has constituted a composite Inter Ministerial Committee (IMC) under the chairmanship of the Addl. Secretary (I&B) and comprising officers drawn from Ministries of Home Affairs, Law & Justice, Women and Child Development, Health & Family Welfare, External Affairs, Defence, Consumer Affairs and a representative from the industry in Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), to take cognizance sou-motu or look into specific complaints regarding violation of the Programme Code and Advertising Code in respect of content carried by private TV channels. The IMC functions in a recommendatory capacity. The final decision regarding penalties and its quantum is taken by the Ministry on the basis of the recommendations of IMC.

With regard to internet journalism, Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology has stated that there is no Committee constituted with regard to content on internet.

(c): As on date, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has permitted 400 private satellite TV channels in the category of News and Current Affairs. The list of permitted satellite TV channels is available on Ministry's website i.e. www.mib.nic.in

(d) to (e): As per existing regulatory framework, the telecast of content on private satellite TV channels is regulated as per Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and

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Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 framed thereunder. The Act does not provide for pre-censorship of any programmes and advertisements telecast on such TV channels. However, it prescribes that all programmes and advertisements telecast on such TV channels should be in conformity with the Programme Code and Advertising Code prescribed under the aforesaid Act and the rules framed thereunder. Action is taken against TV channels whenever violation of the said codes is brought to the notice of the Ministry. (The Programme Code and Advertising Code are available on the Ministry's website: mib.nic.in). The Programme and Advertising Codes contain a whole range of parameters to regulate programmes and advertisements on TV such channels including the content which is likely to create panic and unrest among the common public or affects the peace and communal harmony in the country. In this regard, some specific provisions made in the Programme Code are given as under:

Rule 6(c) provides that no programme should be carried in the cable service which contains attack on religions or communities or visuals or words contemptuous of religious groups or which promote communal attitudes;

Rule 6(d) provides that no programme should be carried in the cable service which contains anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos and half-truths;

Rule 6(e) provides that no programme should be carried in the cable service which is likely to encourage or incite violence or contains anything against maintenance of law and order or which promote anti-national attitudes;

An Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) has also been set up in the Ministry to look into the specific complaints or suo-motu take cognizance against violation of Programme and Advertising Codes. Appropriate action is taken as per Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, if any violation of the said codes is established.

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